

Lame Games we Play 4 – Same Game

Welcome to Redemption Church! It is a beautiful day in Plano Tx and I excited to be preaching the word to you today. Hello as always to each of you in the room and watching or listening online.

We are in the 4th week of our series – The Lame Games We Play.

Lame Games we Play Title

Life is filled with games that we should no longer play. We need to put the controller down and walk away when it comes to THE SHAME GAME, THE BLAME GAME & THE NAME GAME.

Those are the 3 games we mentioned in the first 3 weeks of this series.

Today I want to talk to you about the SAME GAME.

The Same Game

The same game is a tricky game that takes your eyes off the screen and onto the player beside you.

Winning the game in front of you is no longer enough, you need to be like the person beside you.

Every video game needs a controller. Controllers started off easily enough. There were the pong controllers that only had a wheel to control the paddle. There were Atari joysticks that had a direction stick and 1 button. Then along came the Nintendo and it had a directional pad, A & B buttons, and a start and select button. Things continued to get bigger & better with the NES Advantage that had an arcade like joystick, large A & B buttons, and TURBO BUTTONS!

There was this growing concern not to just have the gaming system and the game... you needed a better controller.

Then came along this...

The Wizard Power Glove

“I love the power glove. It’s so bad.”

Anyone know what this clip is from? It is from a 1989 movie called The Wizard and is basically one long commercial for Nintendo. It features the Power Glove, and every kid wanted it. None of us even understood what it did, but that didn’t matter, we wanted to be like the bad kid in The Wizard. Kids came to school and would lie about owning the Power Glove. “Prove it. Bring it to school... show us a picture...” This conversation happened at lunch every day.

The Same Game

The same game is a tricky game that takes your eyes off the screen and onto the player beside you.

Do you think our society plays the same game?

The major advertising marketing game plan is the Same Game - to prey upon our desire to be like everyone else. Buy this new car... be like the people in the commercial. Buy these clothes... be like the models wearing them. Listen to this music... be like pop star.

The Same Game shows up in your Bible. Israel constantly plays the Same Game and it always got them in trouble.

1 Samuel 8:4 (NIV2011) So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

1 Samuel 8:5 (NIV2011) They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

1 Samuel 8:20 (NIV2011) Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

Israel why do you want a king? Verse 20 reveals the answer... to be like all the other nations.

“Like all the other”

Why do you want the things you want? Is it to be like all the others?

It's ok to want things, but what is your motivation for wanting the thing?

Israel wanted to be like the other nations. They wanted to be the same as. They were playing the Same Game.

Do you realize what “the other” is going through?

We often make the mistake of wanting to be like someone else, without fully understanding what that person is experiencing.

I want to be powerful like a president of the United States. If you don't like Trump, then pick another president you would like to be like. You want to have a team around you that you tell them what to do and they do it. The president never has to clean their room. They never cook their meal. They never have to do laundry or go shopping. They don't have to drive. Whatever they want, they just ask for it, and they get it.

Looks like a pretty sweet deal right. What is not to like?

Oh there is plenty to not like. Do you realize the pressure every president faces? No you don't. Neither do I.

You may think mentioning the president is too political... I hear you. Let's change it. Let's talk about your boss.

Everyone thinks “If I were the boss...” And we have these thoughts just buzz around our head. I would do this and this and this. But when you are put in the place of responsibility, perhaps you know that those thoughts that just buzzed around so effortlessly, tend to carry a heavier burden when you are sitting in the bosses chair.

You want to be like those people... Have the power, have the influence, have the money, have the physique, have the job,

and the attention... BUT do we fully understand what they are going through?

Israel wanted to be like the other nations. Samuel points out what the other nations are going through.

1 Samuel 8:11 (NIV2011) He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.

1 Samuel 8:12 (NIV2011) Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

1 Samuel 8:13 (NIV2011) He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.

1 Samuel 8:14 (NIV2011) He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants.

1 Samuel 8:15 (NIV2011) He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants.

1 Samuel 8:16 (NIV2011) Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use.

1 Samuel 8:17 (NIV2011) He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.

1 Samuel 8:18 (NIV2011) When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."

You want to be like the other nations, but Israel, do you know what those nations are going through?

Do you realize what “the other” is going through?

We see what other people have, but we don't understand the costs they have paid.

Who wouldn't want to be a successful writer like Vicky Skinner? But do you realize the cost she has gone through and is going through? She has sat how many hours staring at a computer screen? She is getting a book published that will be carried in Barnes & Nobles, but I invite you to ask her about the books she wrote that publishers passed on. And do you realize what she is even going through now that she is experiencing success? It is not all cupcakes & rainbows.

Who wouldn't want to be able to play multiple instruments like Shelton Mono? The dude is like the power glove. He is “bad.” But do you understand the hours he has spent in practice. He kept playing even when he didn't enjoy his own playing. There were times where he HATED how he sounded, but he kept playing. Do you understand the cost he has paid and is paying to have this skill. Do you understand the pressure of leading a band?

How can you possibly know what “the other” is going through? The Same Game doesn't show you the cost, struggle, or failure.

Even though the Prophet Samuel told them the cost that the other nations were paying in having an earthly king, they decided to play the same game.

Please look at me as I tell you. Trying to be like someone else is going to cost you.

Playing the Same Game will cost you your uniqueness.

You can't be a copy of someone else and be unique. There is nothing unique in a copy.

You can learn from others. You can try to achieve the greatness & success you see in others, but don't try to be them. You need to be you and achieve your greatness and success.

Israel was unique. They were the only nation founded by God. They were the only nation who had God as their King. Israel received unique promises from God that have never been duplicated.

Genesis 12:2 (NIV2011) “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”

God promised that they would be a great nation, blessed, given a great name, and would be a blessing to others.

Look how unique this next verse is.

Genesis 12:3 (NIV2011) I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Israel, you are so important that people who bless you will be blessed. Whoever curses you will end up cursing themselves in to no longer existing. ALL PEOPLE will be blessed through you. THROUGH YOU. God gave them this unique position that blessing would flow THROUGH THEM into all the world.

Israel was too busy playing the Same Game to realize how unique and special they are. They were willing to walk away from their uniqueness in order to copy the other nations...

The Amalekites, Edomites, Canaanites, Moabites, Ammonites, Midianites, Philistines... Israel wanted to be like these nations. None of these nations had God as their King! None of these nations had God speak to them. None of them had received the promise of God. Blessing never flowed from these nations. The Messiah that would save us from our sin would never come from these nations. Yet Israel wanted to be like them.

Are any of these nations still around? No all these nations fizzled and very little is remembered of them. Their greatest claim to fame is that they were enemies of Israel.

By the way all the unique promises God gave to Abraham are yours as well, through faith.

God wants to make you great. Your name great. He is blessing you! Whoever blesses you is going to be blessed. And I feel sorry for those who are cursing you, because they are cursing themselves right out of existence. ALL PEOPLE ONE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU.

Why would you want to walk away from that unique blessing?!?

The people you want to copy, if God is not their king, they will end up just like the Amalekites, Edomites, Canaanites, Moabites, Ammonites, Midianites, Philistines.

You are unique. You are blessed. You are called and chosen. You are empowered. You are highly favored. You are hand selected by God to do hand selected things in the earth.

You are called to be different.

I can hardly get away from this scripture. This is a life verse for me. Make it your life verse.

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV2011) But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Do you know who you are? You are hand selected people. You are a royal priesthood. You are both kings & priests. You are a Holy Nation.

Do you understand what it means to be Holy?

The word Holy is Hagios in the Greek.

Hagios

Before we talk about Hagios, let's point out the root word it is derived from.

Hagos – an awful thing.

Hagos is a thing that no one wants. Hagos is dirty. You would never display Hagos in your home. Hagos is so gross, if you spilt some on your shirt, you would just throw the shirt away.

Hagos is like your toilet bowl brush. It is pretty gross. No one ever wants to touch their toilet bowl brush. After you use your toilet bowl brush you wash your hands real good, because it is Hagos. It is an awful thing.

When you need to brush your teeth, would you ever reach for your toilet brush?

What about when you need to comb your hair?

You are in the kitchen and you have a pot full of yummy spaghetti on the stove. So you reach for your toilet bowl brush to serve it right?

You mean you wouldn't do that?

You wouldn't reach for Hagos... You would reach for Hagios.

Hagios – Holy Thing that is dedicated to a specific purpose.

The toilet bowl brush is Hagos – an awful thing.

Hagios is something that has been cleaned and prepared for a specific purpose.

You keep your toothbrush clean. You don't clean your floors with your toothbrush and then stick in your mouth.

You don't use your hairbrush on anything else but your hair. It only serves that specific purpose.

You have special kitchenware and silverware that you carefully clean and that is what you use to serve spaghetti. You set these instruments apart. They are HAGIOS HOLY and not be used for just any dirt HAGOS things.

When you want to copy someone who doesn't have a HAGIOS dedicated purpose in their life it is like your hairbrush asking "Please use me in the toilet. Don't worry about my specific purpose."

You are a Holy Nation. You are Hagios.

Israel had a Hagios set apart calling, yet they wanted to be like Hagos nations that no God call in their life.

Do you realize that God something unique for you? It would be so much better for you to fulfill that calling than to play the Same Game?

Who are you trying to be like?

Young people fall prey to the Same Game a lot. The music video pop star life looks so appealing. The instagram pictures make you jealous. The desire to be popular is hard to overcome.

Young people you are called for greater things than this. You are Hagios. God uniquely made you for a specific purpose. FIND THAT PURPOSE!

Now older crowd... This relates to us also. We too fall prey to the Same Game.

We fall into debt to keep up with joneses. Those people bought a brand new car, so we also need one. We rarely think about our finances as an opportunity to fulfill a Godly Kingdom purpose.

We enslave ourselves on our job and leave no time or energy for our family or our God calling. We do this because we think this is what humans are supposed to do. We end up giving our family & God whatever is left over.

We become so focused on image. We see those pictures of others of facebook and we become overrun with a desire to be just like them... often at the expense of our true calling.

This even applies within the Kingdom of God. In Church, we try to be like our minister, pastor, preacher. If your minister is not careful they will try to be like the rich successful minister on TV. Don't play the Same Game. Be who God is calling you to be.

If you are trying to be like anyone NOT NAMED JESUS, then you are doing it wrong!

You can try your best to be a copy of someone else, but I have bad news for you. Results may vary.

Results may vary

The thing you are willing to sell your God given destiny for, will never be worth it. That will never be a fair trade.

Also you will never be able to copy that other person. You were not made to be them.

You can either be a 3rd rate copy, or you can be a 1st rate you.

What are you called to do? Are you fulfilling that calling.

Have you been distracted by the Same Game?

Do you want Jesus to be your King and do you want to be His Holy Nation?